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ABSTRACT

The central issue discussed in this paper on policy issues in early childhood education concerns the locus of primary responsibility for the care and rearing of the infant and young child. To provide an analytic basis for decision-making in early childhood education, the author (1) describes the serious and deepening societal problems that appear to underly the demand for preschool programs, (2) identifies the various interest groups advocating child care and relates their perceived needs, (3) examines the Federal role in providing early childhood education, and (4) evaluates the evidence regarding the efficacy of current sponsored programs. Based upon such information, this paper suggests that the case for societal assumption of universal child care has not been clearly established. Without first obtaining far better understanding of developmental processes in all domains and of the effects of group care or early schooling at various ages, the nation should not establish massive and universal child care programs. (CS)

POLICY ISSUES
IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION*

> Whenever men seek to change ancient human practices, they are wise to heed the physician's dictum: Primum non nocere: "First, do no harm," or "Take care that the remedy is no worse than the disease."

I INTRODUCTION

Just before I began to write this paper, I glanced through our local newspaper and noticed a picture of a young couple I know, with their eight month old baby. They are engaged in what some might view as a private experiment: they share one full-time job, each working half-time as youth ministers on the Stanford University campus, and they have another full-time job to share - the care of their infant. In our society, it may seem strange and novel for a husband and wife to share a paid job - and to share the care of a child and household chores equally - but, upon reflection, one may realize that this is an age-old pattern of pre-industrial nations. It was only when men left the homestead to go to work in industry and business that the pattern changed. First husbands and fathers left, and now wives and mothers, in many cases, are leaving the homestead and going to work.

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* Much of the material in this paper has been taken from the writer's monograph, Early Childhood Education: Perspectives on the Federal and Office of Education Roles, Stanford Research Institute, July, 1972.

What has all this to do with policy issues in early childhood education? The central issue in early childhood education concerns the locus of primary responsibility for the care and rearing of the infant and young child.

Although traditionally the family has been the primary institution for child care and rearing, various groups have focused on publicly-funded preschool programs as a way to resolve basic personal-societal* problems. And the demand for such programs has grown louder and more insistent. The President's December 1971 veto of the Child Development Act, S. 2007 has in no sense stilled the clamor for such programs. For the need arises from fundamental conditions within the society, manifested in a diversity of demands, varying with the specific circumstances of individual and group proponents. They range from implicit or explicit claims of primary societal responsibility for the care and nurture of the young to a desire for an appropriate "nursery school" experience for children. The fact that the demands span the socioeconomic spectrum testifies to the need and insures its persistence as a powerful political issue.

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* "Personal-societal" is hyphenated deliberately, for wherever men live in groups, the two are in reality not distinct. When we are in the midst of an environment, we are not aware of its effects and characteristics - thus, when people lived in closely knit communities, both as constituent parts of and beholden to their infrastructures, many needs were met in unobtrusive, less conscious ways than at present. The effect of the industrial revolution - in fragmenting communities and segmenting and dehumanizing people are ending with its slow demise. Our social action efforts as a nation represent our <u>conscious</u> attempts to reconstruct the community (i.e., to reaffirm the responsibility of all to each member) in ways relevant to our needs in the emergent postindustrial American society. The fact that the Federal government is called upon to foster and support this effort does not change the character of the personal-societal relationship; it simply reflects its broader base.

Public policy issues arise out of perceived dysfunctions within the society. They provide rallying points for a multiplicity of competing forces within the body politic, each with a different point of view, often vehemently espoused. Their programmatic resolution seeks to honor as broad a spectrum of these perspectives as appears rational. In our nation, public policy issues arise almost invariably and primarily as a result of socioeconomic dysfunctions. The national issue of publicly supported programs for young children is no exception.

Our concern in this paper is to present the public policy issues in the early childhood area. First, however, in order to better understand the circumstances that give rise to the issues, we will briefly describe the relevant conditions that appear to underly the demand for preschool programs, identify the proponents of the programs and their perceived needs, describe the Federal role in early childhood, and examine the evidence regarding the efficacy of current sponsored programs. This material will provide an analytic basis for decision-making in early childhood education.

II RELEVANT SOCIETAL CONDITIONS

Among the societal conditions that create the demand for publicly funded preschool programs and that reinforce its urgency, these appear most salient: (1) the socioeconomic needs of families that compel mothers to enter the work force, and the critical need of the economy for the paid work of these same women; (2) the demise of the extended family and small community; (3) the drive for equal human rights and for a greater number of options and life choices, including that of women; (4) the existence of a segment of the population - termed poor and near-poor - who essentially are isolated from the fruits of our socioeconomic progress as a nation and alienated from its institutional forms; (5) the belief that education - in this case early education - is an effective instrument of social reform; and (6) the apparent feeling on the part of a relatively small but growing number of parents (reinforced by some child development specialists and private enterprise ads for day care) that they are less adequate to the child-rearing role than are institutional programs devised and run by "experts." No one of these conditions is singly responsible for the perceived need for preschool programs. Rather, they are to greater or lesser degrees interactive with each other and with other conditions. However, for simplicity, they are discussed below as though they were distinct in their impact.

Socioeconomic Needs and the Economy

Exploding the myth that the female labor force is largely made up of bored wives and mothers anxious to get out of their homes, Bell (1972) emphasizes the crucial importance of working women as contributors both to their own families' incomes and to the growth of the national economy.

She states:

> ... women workers are more important than ever before in maintaining their families' standard of living, in lifting poor families out of poverty, in serving as the sole breadwinner for many families, and in contributing to economic production and growth .... (p. 1)

Stating that the "model" American family of father, mother, and two children is scarcely a model at all, since it actually encompasses fewer than one-sixth of all families, Bell indicates that almost that same proportion of families are headed by women (6 million families with 20 million members - half of whom are dependent children). Each year, owing to the increasing rates of separation and divorce (Profiles of Children, 1970), hundreds of thousands more children live in single-parent families. This increases the number of parents who must work and therefore must seek care for their children.

Further, for many intact families, the earnings of the wife "spell the difference between poverty and scraping by"; and the paid work of many more wives insure their families' "moderate comfort rather than just scraping by." A survey of the reasons why women work reveals that 41 percent of the women work to support themselves or their families and another 48 percent work to "bring in extra money." Only 11 percent work for other reasons. (Harris, 1970)

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The Demise of the Extended Family and Community

Historically, the primary socializing agents of the infant and child have been the family and extended family, merging into and aided and supported by the surrounding community. Far more frequently than not, mothers not only nurtured their infant, but also were busy with a multitude of other tasks and therefore required and received the ready assistance of relatives, older siblings, friends, or hired help. For mothers

to work is not a new phenomenon: what is new is the absence both of the mother herself, who often works some distance away from the homestead, and of household help or relatives to help with the children.

Thus increasingly, in our highly mobile and atomistic society, neither the extended family nor the community remain intact to perform the traditional child care roles. In fact, ours may be the first society in which large groups of mothers have reared their children essentially alone. Table 1 presents our summary of the changing attitudes and circumstances which reduce the supports of extended family and community that formerly underpinned the nuclear family.

Clearly, the fact that the extended family and community are missing does not diminish the need for the myriad ways in which they complemented, supplemented, aided, and supported the parents and child - and from which tasks they in turn derived a profound sense of human purpose and meaning. When a basic need persists subsequent to the disappearance of the traditional resources for its fulfillment, inevitably demands will be made on the larger society to assume that burden. Thus, increasingly, extrafamilial forms and institutions have been sought and consequently these have been competing with the family as the primary socializing agent of the child.

Equal Rights

The struggle to achieve human rights is a universal and timeless struggle - limited to no single sex or race or ethnic group or stage of life. At present, among the most visible and active groups in this struggle are the women's liberation organizations. Their goal is to achieve a sense of personal dignity, a sense of their own worth as competent human beings separate and apart from their roles as wives, mothers or homemakers. Feeling that the society neither honors nor values the

Table 1

CHANGING ATTITUDES AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY REFLECTED IN CHILD CARE DEMAND

	More Typical of Past	More Typical of Present
Family		
Physical presence	Sometimes several generations present	Often absent due to mobility
Child rearing and care	Many family members participate actively	Usually not available, or "by appointment"
Affective aspects	Great pleasure expressed in children: warmth between parents and child reinforced	Accent on youth: grandmothers not anxious to assume role: wish "to do own thing"; therefore parents and child feel rejected
Cultural background	Stable-consistent over generations	Mobility may bring conflicting values
Shares experience/ information	Immediately available source	Not readily available
Nature of mother role	Shared task with relatives, friends	Mother and father alone; no help from others
Importance of mother and father roles	Very worthwhile	Less important than careers
Hired babysitter	Not needed	Needed but may be difficult to find or afford
Marital situation	Usually intact family	Much higher proportion of single parents
	Family resides within extended family complex	Nuclear family resides alone
	Usually shared cultural values between parents and extended family	More marriage between members of groups with conflicting cultural values
Community		
Neighbors/friends	Reinforced warm feelings of the parents and child	Neighbors may be strangers, few close friends
Importance of parental role	Considered important	Not as important as career
Community responsibility to the child	Child protected by community concern for the family and child	No one responsible other than immediate family

traditional womanly roles, women's liberation seems to be saying: "We can prove our worthwhileness by entering and competing in the arena that the society seems to value - the market place."

For those women who are economically and culturally affluent or comfortable, the drive to find purpose and meaning in their lives - to feel that they are an integral part of the societal endeavor - is powerful indeed. This need of women may appear to be a separate need that has very little to do with the needs of children for appropriate nurturance and socialization. It is subject to the interpretation that the group that traditionally shouldered these tasks wants to go on strike or to abdicate, and in a limited number of cases, the interpretation applies.

However, for a good many activists and for a large proportion of women whose feelings are tapped informally or through surveys, the deeper issues of equality and self-worth call forth their allegiance. Harris polls conducted in 1970 and 1972 reveal a significant shift in the "favor/oppose" attitudes of men and women toward efforts to strengthen or change women's status in the society:

	Women		Men	
	Favor	Oppose	Favor	Oppose
1970	40%	42%	44%	39%
1972	48	36	49	36

In 1970, 40 percent of the women favored such efforts but by 1972, the percentage had jumped to 48 percent. Since it is the younger and better educated women who are strongly for such efforts, an increase can be expected in the percentage favoring improved status for women as time goes on. The percentage of men who favor improving women's status has also grown in recent years.

There were also shifts in sentiment from 1970 to 1972 on several key questions. Some of these questions and results were:

- If women don't speak up for themselves and confront men on their real problems, nothing will be done about these problems: 71 percent of the women and 67 percent of the men agreed, in contrast to 66 percent and 64 percent respectively in 1971;
- Women are right to be unhappy with their roll in American society but wrong in the way they're protesting: 51 percent of the women and 44 percent of the men agreed, in contrast to 45 percent and 41 percent in 1971;
- It's about time women protested the real injustices they've faced for years: 48 percent of the women and 41 percent of the men agreed, in contrast to 38 percent and 36 percent respectively in 1971.

Clearly significant changes in attitudes are occurring.

In a more profound sense, the need on the part of women for a sense of personal worth, for affirmation from the American society of the value of their efforts (no matter how it is disguised or expressed) is central to whether children in their turn are raised with a sense of their own self worth. Many mothers feel demeaned by their life circumstances and by the manifest values of what they view as a male-dominated, technological society. Carrying within themselves the weight of the frustrations of past generations, they tend to take out these frustrations on their children, particularly their male children, who later in turn, as husbands, take them out on their wives, who in turn take them out on their children - in an endless, psychically damaging cycle to men, women, and children.

The Economically Disadvantaged

Although it has been often said that a nation's children are its most valuable natural resource, only in the past few years have we as

a society become aware of the numbers of children who lack many of the elements essential to their optimal development. Studies of the nutritional status, general health, and life circumstances of our child population have underscored the magnitude of the deprivations and the complexity of the amelioration or preventative task. Further, a growing body of information has suggested that a child's earliest experiences may have significant consequences for his development.

More equitable distribution of the nation's resources and a higher quality of life for those groups who share too little in the nation's abundance are both moral and pragmatic objectives. Present child care programs provide a two-pronged attack on the problem: (1) through Head Start and similar programs, which are expected to enhance the participating children's development by providing an appropriate learning environment sufficiently early to prevent impairment of results; and (2) through job training programs for parents (with day care for their children), on the assumption that training will open doors to improved employment opportunities and thus allow parents to purchase a sufficient share of the nation's resources to meet their family's needs. What remains at issue is the extent to which these assumptions realistically reflect the true situations of children and parents, and whether the "corrective" programs are adequate to resolve the problems they seek to address. These, along with other programs, represent what appear to be limited, uncoordinated, and insufficient attacks on relatively small aspects of basic, and seemingly intractable, socioeconomic problems which affect the total society. The issue of more equitable distribution of the nation's resources has yet to be grapp.ed with in the fundamental way - and the hard choices made - that its significance requires.

Early Education as an Instrument of Social Reform

It would appear that having exhausted most other avenues for quick and easy solutions of fundamental societal problems, the nation has discovered the infant and young child as the repository of potential societal salvation. The view is held that ever earlier intervention programs will serve to prevent future problems. But since the goals of such programs are multiple and divergent--ranging from the view that child care programs are vehicles for reducing the welfare rolls to their utility in potentiating the development of the educationally and economically disadvantaged--and since the relationship between these programs and later life "success" has yet to be demonstrated, the expectation that such programs will resolve societal problems appears ill-founded. Further, to the extent that they divert attention from serious efforts to grapple with the broad and basic issues that affect the total society, they will have detracted from the nation's long term interests.

Presumed Parental Child-Rearing Inadequacy

There is a feeling abroad in the land that the methods parents use in the rearing of their children are less adequate than group programs designed by experts for the optimum development of their children. This feeling is transmitted by the implicit message of some government programs,* the speeches and writings of a number of child development professionals, and by the advertising by private and franchised day care proprietors. Further, the effects of rapid technological change, manifested in changing behavior, mores, and values, tend to erode parental confidence in their own ability to rear their children.

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* The boarding schools for American Indian children are an extreme example of well-intentioned government assumption of the child education and rearing which has resulted in some unexpected deleterious and sometimes tragic consequences.

For cautious or timorous parents, who may already suspect that they are not adequate to the parental role, the apparent advocacy of preschool programs by child development specialists and the sometimes exaggerated claims of day care advertisers may reinforce their doubts and make them wonder whether others may not do better by their children. Other parents, upon discovering that child rearing is a difficult and demanding task, may feel ambivalent about their responsibility and rationalize their support of preschool programs as being better for their children. There is little question that many parents require the aid and support of community resources, but it is necessary that these strengthen their confidence in their role rather than suggest or imply inadequacy on their part.

Summary

We have seen that out "growth"-focused economy and the inadequate earnings of fathers requires that mothers enter and sustain the work force; that the sources of help in child care and rearing traditionally supplied by the extended family and community no longer (or too seldom) are present; that women's liberation groups are leading the struggle for equal women's rights and are demanding child care as one way to free them to exercise these rights; that many children lack some or most of the resources that are presumed to optimize their development; and that, to some extent, there is a feeling abroad in the land that parents may be less adequate than institutions for rearing children. Obviously these are conflicting circumstances that relate to the demand for child care. Yet they reflect, or are symptomatic of, far deeper and more fundamental dysfunctions in the society.*

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* One small example is the increasing separation by age of our people. On the one hand, retired men and women languish without important things to do--suffering from a lack of activity and of a sense of purpose in their lives--while parents struggle with their burdens and responsibilities unaided either in "word or deed."

III THE CONSTITUENCY

In his veto message on the Child Development Act, S. 2007, the President raised a number of issues with respect to Federal involvement in early education. Indicating that there has not been adequate national debate and consensus on this far-reaching topic, the President was unwilling to "commit the vast moral authority of the National Government to communal rather than family-centered child rearing. Stating that he shares the view of the bill's supporters that its child development provisions make it the "most radical piece of legislation to emerge from the 92nd Congress," Mr. Nixon described the bill as "a long leap into the dark for the U.S. Government and the American people."

Asserting that his administration will not ignore the challenge to do more for America's preschool children, the President insisted that the nation's response must be "a measured, evolutionary, painstakingly considered one, consciously designed to cement the family in its rightful position as the keystone of our civilization."

The President felt that the child care challenge is being met both by such current efforts as Head Start, by increased food stamp and nutrition assistance, by improved medicaid provisions, by liberalized tax deductions for child care for working parents, and by the proposed Family Assistance Program (FAP) (H.R. 1). Table 2 on the following page compares the views of the Congress (as inferred from S. 2007) with those of the administration on a number of important issues. However, there are large groups of stakeholders who disagree that current efforts are adequate and consequently are pressing for the establishment of an increased number of preschool programs by the Federal government.

Table 2

APPARENT VIEWS OF CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT
ON FEDERAL ROLE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

View	Congress	President
Adequate national debate and consensus	Assumed	No
Commits moral authority of government to communal child rearing rather than family rearing	Moot	Yes
Family has primary child socialization role	Qualified yes	Yes
Effects of universal program on family	Strengthens family	Weakens family
Should be universal program available to all children	Yes	No
Should be primarily public, not proprietary programs	Yes: sliding scale payments	No: tax incentives for 97% of employed parents
Day care allows low income mothers to work	If mother chooses	Should work (H.R. 1; FAP)
Child care need has been demonstrated	Yes	No
Needs adequately met by current activities plus FAP	No	Yes
Pragmatic issues:		
Administrative feasibility (S. 2007)	Assumed	No
Adequate qualified staff available	No: training funds provided	No
Costs: estimated $2 billion to $20 billion per year	Necessary	Not justified

Source: Based on Title V: Child Development Programs (S. 2007) passed by Congress, December 7, 1971, and the President's Veto Message, December 9, 1971.

Stakeholder Groups

As we have indicated earlier, there are a number of groups strongly uring the establishment of public programs in early childhood education. Table 3 summarizes the views, circumstances, and child care needs of the various stakeholder groups. The most vociferous representatives of the middle and upper class demand are the women's liberation groups who seem to be saying essentially that the care and nurture of their children is a societal responsibility and that they should be sufficiently freed of household and motherhood tasks to achieve personal fulfillment through careers or extra-home activities.

Lending quiet support to the women's lib demands are large numbers of suburban and other housewives--some of whom exhibit what psychiatrists have referred to as the "depleted mother syndrome"*--who labor essentially alone, without the traditional supports and aid of relatives and friends. These women do not necessarily subscribe to the notion of primary societal responsibility for their children, but many have a vague or more explicit sense that there is something wrong with their lonely role. They would welcome, and in many cases urgently need, a variety of supports during the difficult early child-rearing years. In addition, working women of all classes require adequate care for their children for 10 to 12 or more hours of the work-day or work-night.

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* Increasingly psychiatrists have been seeing young mothers who are depressed. Some of them are referring to these patients as exhibiting a "depleted mother syndrome." Susan Jenks (San Francisco Chronicle and Examiner, March 5, 1972) describes the "typical" patient of a psychiatric outpatient clinic in Philadelphia as a middle-class housewife in her 30s with at least two small children at home. These women are almost three times more susceptible to depression than their husbands and their symptoms are likely to be "insomnia, crying jags, loss of sexual interest or just a feeling of helplessness about the future."

Table 3

APPARENT CIRCUMSTANCES, VIEWS, AND CHILD CARE NEEDS OF STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Stakeholder Group	Related Circumstances	View Held on Primary Responsibility for Child Rearing:* (Societal or Familial)	Form of Child Care Demanded or Needed†
Women's lib: largely white upper and middle classes.	Personal fulfillment through career or extra-home activities.	Strong implication of primary societal responsibility.	Ranges from all-day care for career women to part-day for others; availability and choice of options demanded.
Working women: all socio-economic classes.	(1) Many one-parent families; employment crucial. (2) Some families require two paychecks to make ends meet. (3) Others simply wish careers.	Primarily familial responsibility but require societal help.	Day care, Head Start, Follow Through; 10 to 12 or more hours per day and before and after school care; availability and choice of options demanded.
Suburban and "depleted" mothers: middle and lower classes.	Lack traditional help from extended family and friends in many cases.	Primarily familial--require help.	Crisis, all-day, 24-hour day care; part-day care; nursery schools.
Racial and ethnic groups: economically disadvantaged.	Too many in poverty over several generations; many cases of make-shift arrangements for children when employed; too many children do poorly in school.	Parents consider it primarily familial; experts and decision-makers feel large part of responsibility for change is societal.	Head Start type, Follow Through; all-day and before and after school care (developmental child care).
Parents of mentally, emotionally, and physically handicapped.	Early education necessary to counteract effects of handicapping condition.	Primarily familial, but society must provide necessary services and help.	Special education; other day care services when appropriate.
Advocates of job training for welfare/ AFDC mothers.	Transgenerational cycle of poverty should be broken.	Primarily societal to eradicate social problems that lead to family dependency, but child rearing is a familial responsibility with large societal inputs.	Head Start type, Follow Through; all-day and before and after school care (developmental child care).
Professionals advocating early childhood education.	Special cases of hospitalism, severe abuse and neglect, and depriving home conditions that may lead to school and life failures.	Ranges from primarily societal responsibility to improve conditions and to prevent future problems, to supportive services to make families more effective.	Foster home care, Head Start type, Follow Through; all-day and before school care; developmental infant and child care.
Advocates of programs to create more jobs in the economy.	"Surplus" of teachers; need jobs for less advantaged (paraprofessionals).	Societal responsibility to provide training slots; child rearing secondary.	Any child care program.

* Presumptive evidence only; aided by polls and other written material (including Women's Lib journals and women's magazines, Statement of Findings and Purpose of Senate Bill S. 2007 as as reported in the Congressional Record, September 9, 1971.

† In general, the demand is for a developmental child care program that addresses the child's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs. Custodial care is the rule at present, but is viewed as inadequate or harmful.

Among the economically less advantaged groups--at least three-quarters of whom are white--there are also demands for preschool programs. And according to the results of a Gallup poll, 64 percent of the American people support this demand. The strongest proponents are the minority racial and ethnic groups, who view preschool programs as the avenue to their child's success both in school and later life, and also as appropriate sources of child care during the mother's work day.

Other proponents of preschool programs for the economically less advantaged are: (1) certain professionals who view early intervention as a way of breaking the transgenerational cycle of poverty, by preventing "depriving" circumstances in the child's early years that result in inadequate school performance; (2) those who feel that work training programs for welfare and AFDC parents will reduce the numbers of dependent families; and (3) those who look upon child care programs as employment opportunities for out of work teachers, paraprofessionals, and auxiliary personnel. From the above, it is evident that the preponderance of needs are "adult" or societal needs rather than primarily child needs.

Figure 1 summarizes the diverse types of child care that each stakeholder group appears to require. It can be seen that the needs vary in length of time (2 hours to 24) as well as in other dimensions. The time dimension alone has great significance in terms of the effects of the experience on the participating children. A child participating in a two-hour group experience will not be affected to nearly the same degree as a child in such a program for 10 to 12 or more hours a day. Obviously, when a child spends most of the waking hours of his early formative years in an institutional setting, to that extent he will be reared by those caretakers and by that group experience, rather than by his family experience.

	NURSERY SCHOOLS	HEAD START FOLLOW THROUGH	DEVELOPMENTAL DAY CARE IN FAMILY HOME OR CENTER	ADOPTION, FOSTER, AND INSTITUTIONAL CARE	BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE	CRISIS 24-HOUR CARE	SPECIAL PROGRAMS
WORKING WOMEN		▲	▲		▲	▲	
ECONOMICALLY AND EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTAGED	▲	▲	▲		▲	▲	
PARENTS IN JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS		▲	▲		▲	▲	
"DEPLETED" MOTHERS	▲	▲	▲			▲	
VULNERABLE CHILDREN (ABANDONED, BATTERED, ABUSED, AND NEGLECTED)			▲	▲		▲	
HANDICAPPED CHILDREN	▲	▲	▲			▲	▲
SUBURBAN WOMEN	▲		▲			▲	
WOMEN'S LIB	▲		▲		▲	▲	

FIGURE 1 TYPES OF CHILD CARE APPARENTLY NEEDED OR DEMANDED BY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Summary of Objectives

Depending on the needs or attitudes of various groups of proponents, early childhood development programs are viewed as having a diverse set of objectives that address the perceived needs of society or parents or children.

Societal objectives include:

- Prevention or amelioration of life conditions of children that may lead to dependency, poverty, or emotional instability.
- Reduction of welfare rolls
- Aid in resolving the unemployment problem by providing job openings in a legitimated new child care program
- Strengthening of families, who might otherwise slip into dependency, by supportive programs and services.

Objectives relevant to parents include:

- Allowing mothers and single heads of families to support their families
- Allowing mothers to work in order to contribute needed additional funds to support the family
- Allowing welfare and AFDC parents to receive training or education so that they may find gainful employment
- Allowing mothers to be "fulfilled" by freeing them to work
- Providing "parking" places for children while parents are shopping or otherwise occupied

The primary objectives for children are:

- To provide growth and learning environments that will allow for their optimal development in all component domains
- To provide for the children's physical safety and supervision through appropriate adult guidance in the absence of parental care.

IV THE ISSUES

Decisions regarding early childhood education programs affect one of our most basic institutions: the family. The family itself is undergoing change, as are the roles and life styles of men and women. Such decisions, too, are complicated by the fact that they involve basic societal and moral issues as well as scientific and pragmatic or management ones. The issues are presented below, not because we are prepared to provide answers but rather because it is eminently appropriate that they and like issues be debated and thrashed out in the national arena. The succeeding sections provide information of relevance to these issues.

The Societal Issue

The basic societal issue in early education concerns the locus of primary responsibility for the socialization of the child. Traditionally this role has resided within the triad of the nuclear family, extended family, and community. Thus, the question is: should the society complement and support the family or move toward its displacement?

As Table 3 showed, most child care proponents seek societal assistance and resources rather than abdication of their primary responsibility for the care and rearing of their children. However, there are those who feel that primary responsibility resides within the society. Although they represent but a small proportion of the child care proponents, the real question is whether their number will increase substantially if the society makes no attempt to deal with the related underlying conditions that create the demand. Obviously imbedded within this issue is the question of the effects of group rearing on our infants and children and thus on the future of the society.

The Moral Issue

The moral issue concerns the extent of society's responsibility for the optimum development of its children. There is little question that millions of young children are not receiving appropriate nutrients for optimal development in all domains. Of these, thousands are neglected, battered, abandoned, or abused children. Others are left to fend for themselves without adult aid or guidance while parents work or are absent, and many more are left in extra-familial situations that range from inadequate to harmful. Where families or parents are either unable or unwilling to provide appropriate nurture, should the society intervene and, if so, what should the state supply? Who shall decide when and under what circumstances the state should act? More basically, what changes are necessary in our institutions and value postulates in order that each member of our human family has access to the prerequisites for a life of dignity? Will the difficult nature and complexity of the last question result in a default on the issue by the society?

There are publicly funded programs to meet many needs of children and families. Further, there have been numerous declarations of intent from the White House, the White House Conferences on Children and on

Nutrition, and from a spate of commission reports, Congressional sources, and private bodies, to provide each child with the resources that will optimize his development in all domains. However, the existent programs are insufficient and inadequate in conception and approach. Here again, difficult choices have to be made if the complex needs of the nation's children are to be met.

Scientific Issues

There are a number of scientific issues to which at present there are only partial or no answers. These include the following:

(1) There is an overriding question: what are the long-term effects of calculated societal interventions on the infant and young child? That is, what effect(s) does extra-familial group-rearing have on the participating child's various development processes? At what age(s) or developmental stage(s), and under what conditions, are the effects enhancing, moot, or impairing?

(2) Are there "critical periods" in early human development; that is, if the child does not have certain experiences by a certain time in his early development, will their lack mean that certain responses will be absent from his repertoire, thereby limiting his learning modes and his future competence in our society? White (1968) refers to these as "transition periods" that he hypothesizes may occur by maturation, possibly on a "fairly regular schedule." After such a transition occurs, it may be that the child can no longer be provided the missing experiences--or, if he can, only "with great difficulty, by some laborious remedial process which is the educational counterpart of psychotherapy." (pp. 212-213)

(3) How plastic is the human being? To what extent do earliest experiences, even prenatal ones, tend to condition and determine behavioral (including learning) styles and modes? Will ever-earlier structured group experiences inhibit personal and cultural diversity in expression among our people? In large part, the goal and focus of our educational system is to produce highly literate adults with elevated capacities for abstract reasoning. Proposed early childhood education programs are conceptualized as furthering this goal. Does this tendency to emphasize school achievement in terms of this goal inhibit expression in other modes and forms which may be of value to our nation and to the individual? Very little is known at present about the range of human abilities and their expression. And our exploration of human creativity is yet at a primitive level. Although scholastic abilities are important, there are other, equally important aspects of human functioning. In pursuit of cognitive development goals, is there a danger that more elusive aspects of human beings may be neglected. This would be a loss of incalculable proportions--both to the individual and to the society.

(4) In our rapidly changing society, and mindful of question (3), how useful is the concept of middle class values and achievement as the idealized standard for all population groups in the nation?

(5) Does early education significantly improve the possibility of school, and later life, "success?" For all children? For certain groups of children?

Pragmatic Issues

Management issues have to do with the "what" and "how" and "who" questions. Who will manage what programmatic responses and how will they address the expressed needs? More specifically, in terms of the thrust of this paper, what is the educational establishment's role in early childhood program (as represented by the U.S. Office of Education), and on what criteria might it differentiate its mission from that of other agencies, particularly the Office of Child Development?

To the present time, there has been a fairly clear division between the responsibility of the school and the home for the development of the nation's children. The educational establishment, of which OE is a part, is concerned primarily with providing a structured learning environment deemed to enhance the child's intellectual development; whereas the family--drawing also on the resources of the community--is concerned with the child's total development. In general, the school has been programmatically concerned with the physical (including nutritional aspects), social, and emotional development of only those individuals or populations which exhibit a sufficiently severe deprivation in these domains that it appears to affect their school performance.

For most children, however, it is expected that when they enter school at age five or six, their development in all domains is adequate and that they have come prepared to learn.* That this expectation is not fulfilled

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* The school attempts in large part to "control" (i.e., to hold constant) the physical, social, and emotional attributes of the students as it concentrates on the teaching-learning tasks. The more permissive or progressive school programs also "control" these aspects of their students but less rigidly, giving looser rein, on the theory that inhibition of normal expression acts to inhibit learning as well--for humans function as unitary beings and not in parts. The rebellion against schools is, to a degree, a rebellion against the notion that present attention to affective and other attributes of children is adequate.

for a significant number (though less than the majority) of children has posed a dilemma for the school system. These children constitute what has come to be viewed as the disadvantaged--economically, educationally, socially, or physically (handicapped). And since their individual needs differ in degree and kind, no single programmatic model appears to be adequate.

Further, the varying circumstances and diverse needs of the adults demanding early childhood programs raise questions as to how comprehensive the societal responsibility and effort should be, and for which groups of families and under whose aegis relevant programs should be managed. Fundamental to the educational establishment's mission are these issues:

- What part, if any, of the early childhood period is part of the educational continuum?
- Since we do not know whether or at what period early development may be enhanced or impaired by a structured group environment, what action should the federal government take?

More specifically, a number of issues in early education require analytic treatment:

- Should OE promote the possibility of reducing the age of entrance to formal school one to two years or more (to three or four years of age)? For all children? For certain groups of children? What qualitative changes would this entail in OE's traditional major concern with intellectual development?
- If the school entry age is not lowered, what approaches or programs should OE promote or what stance should OE assume in regard to the missions of the state department of education or to local early education agencies?
- If the age of school is not reduced, what role should the various federal agencies, especially OE and OCD, have in early education and what are the federal responsibilities, if any, to families of young children and to both proprietary and public institutional programs and arrangements?

V THE NEED AND COSTS OF DAY CARE

Many factors, very difficult to measure, must be considered in any attempt to estimate the current or potential need for child care resources. Among them are the socioeconomic situation of families, the motivations of women for seeking or not seeking employment, the manner in which the society decides to deal with issues of early child development, the thrust of the evidence from research into early education, and the availablility and quality of child care resources.

Current Need

The vetoed Comprehensive Child Development Act referred to "millions of children" needing "developmental" child care. And although certain groups were given priority, the Act affirmed the right of all parents to child care for whatever reason it was desired or needed. The Westinghouse-Westat Day Care Survey Report (1970) states that:

> Perhaps the single most striking fact about day care in this country today is that, despite the manifest need, there is so little of it. The fact is that most of the children of working mothers are cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives." (p. v)

The priority groups of children most in need of resources are:

- The children of working mothers or single parents. Nationally, 12 million women work and have 6 million children under 6 years of age, and 20 million school-age children (6 to 17 years of age).

- The economically disadvantaged children of all racial and ethnic groups, including migrant and Indian children. Ten million children live in poverty: six million white and four million black. Three million of these children are

under 6 years of age. It is felt that many of these children benefit from child care programs that address their physical (including nutritional), cognitive, personal, and social developmental needs.

- Handicapped children: there are six million mentally, emotionally, or physically handicapped children. One million of these children are under 6 years of age.
- Children whose parents are in job training programs, are furthering their education, or are ill or for some reason unable to care for them during certain parts of the day.

It is clear that the 46,300 licensed day care centers and family day care homes which serve but 638,000 children are woefully inadequate to the need. And among the estimated 450,000 unlicensed and unregulated family day care homes, estimated to serve 710,000 children, are those that provide less than adequate or even harmful care.

Beyond the above priority groups, many more families of all socioeconomic levels are demanding the establishment of and access to public programs of early child care for the variety of reasons indicated earlier. It is not known, for example, how many of the 60 percent of U.S. families with incomes too high to be eligible for Head Start but too low to cover the costs of child care, either now desire access or would desire it if more programs were available. Nor do we yet know what the impact of the liberalized tax deductions will be either on promoting the establishment of additional proprietary centers or on increasing the entrance of women into the labor market and thereby increasing the demand for public child care programs. Here again we see the circularity of various personal, economic, and social forces as they become a social issue.

Developmental Care

Most child care arrangements are custodial in nature rather than developmental; that is, they provide for the physical safety and well-being of the child and do not have program elements aimed at promoting his cognitive, social, and emotional development. The survey summarized by Keyserling found (p. 14) that of the 431 centers visited, only 1 percent of proprietary and 9 percent of non-profit centers had developmental components, while 14 percent of proprietary and 28 percent of non-profit centers had "good" care with some developmental components. The remainder had "fair" (custodial), "poor," or "harmful" care. Yet the intent of the bills before the Senate hearings, and the demands of stakeholder groups are for developmental child care programs on the Head Start and Follow Through models. As can be seen in Table 4, most of the various preschool programs and child care arrangements do not have developmental care as their primary goal. This is true despite the fact that very large, and growing, numbers of children require care for long hours of each workday. It is critical that they be cared for in quality programs that provide for their developmental needs in all domains.

Potential Demand

Although some women work to be "self-fulfilled," a far larger proportion (89 percent, as mentioned earlier) work to support themselves or their families or to bring extra money into the family. For example, Keyserling (p. 11) indicated that in 1970, of the 3.9 million families with children under 6 years in which both parents worked, without the mother's earnings 73 percent would have had to struggle by on less than $10,000:

Table 4

APPARENT GOALS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Program	No. of hours per day	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Head Start	3 to 10 summer/all year	Cognitive development leading to school success	Social and emotional development	Parent involvement as reinforcement of Head Start; physical (nutrition)
Follow Through	schoolday	Cognitive development to build on Head Start gains	Social and emotional development	Physical (nutrition); parent involvement
Kindergarten	2-1/2 to 3 hours	Socialization for school	3-R readiness	
Developmental day care (few in number)	8 to 14 hours	Cognitive development	Social and emotional development	Physical development; safety; nutrition
Custodial day care (most centers and homes)	8 to 14 hours	Protective care; safety	Nutrition	Social development
Nursery schools	2-1/2 to 3 hours	Social and emotional development	Cognitive development	Physical development
Before- and after-school care	4 to 6 hours	Protective care; safety	Social, recreational	Nutrition
Crisis 24-hour care	24 hours	Protective care in absence or disability of caretaker		

- 7 percent of the families would have lived in poverty, under $3,000 per year
- 33 percent would have had incomes between $3,000 and $7,000 per year
- 33 percent would have had incomes between $7,000 and $10,000 per year.

It is now also clear that the nation's economic growth depends on the labor or women. In 1950, only 22 percent of women were in the labor force; by 1971, 43 percent of women were employed. The higher the woman's education level, the more likely she is to be employed. In 1971, of women with five years of college, 71 percent were employed; of those with four years of college, 56 percent; and of those with four years of high school, 50 percent. However, only 31 percent of those with eight years of schooling and only 23 percent of those with less than eight years were employed. Since younger women are better educated than older women, and the young tend to look with favor upon the employment of women, over time, more mothers are likely to enter the labor market. Further, working women tend to have fewer children and are thus not tied to their homes for as many years as mothers with more children. For these several reasons, more mothers are likely both to require and to demand adequate child care resources.

Costs of Day Care

The Senate Committee on Finance has estimated costs of day care at three levels of quality: (1) custodial, (2) some developmental and custodial, and (3) developmental with comprehensive services. Estimates of day care center costs range from over $1,500 a year for full-day care per child to over $2,800; costs of family day care homes range from over $1,700 to $2,900; and before- and after-school care costs range from over $300 to $800 a year. Keyserling estimates that only one percent of families can afford the estimated $2,800 for quality day care of one child, and even fewer families can afford such quality care for more than one child.

Estimates made for the Congressional legislation now in progress (S.3193 and S.3228) average about $2,000 a year per child for all-day care. For center care, there is an inverse relation between age of child and cost of care; i.e., the younger the child, the higher the staff-child ratio required.

The major cost of day care is labor--ranging from 75 to 80 percent of the total cost of programs. Since the caliber of staff is crucially important to the appropriate development young children, and since staff account for about four-fifths of the total cost of programs, very little savings could be effected in the programs.

Summary

It is evident that a very large increase in a variety of day care resources is needed to meet the current and potential demand. There are neither sufficient nor adequate facilities and far too few trained personnel.

The Westinghouse-Westat study summarizes the existing situation:

> Day care for young children in the United States today is an institution lagging far behind the social change that has brought about the need for it. It is an unorganized, largely unregulated, and unlicensed service, provided in ways that range from excellent to shockingly poor, and yet it is indispensable to a growing number of people in present-day America: the force of working women of child-bearing age. Working mothers represent all socioeconomic levels, and the family with a working mother is becoming the norm rather than the exception. In the absence of organized day care, ad hoc arrangements, which are largely impossible to assess in any accurate way, abound.

VI THE FEDERAL EFFORT

The Current Effort

Of the seven Federal agencies now with programs affecting children and families (see Figure 2), the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Department of Labor are the major ones. DHEW, through its ten regional offices, fosters and supports a variety of programs encompassing the health, education, and welfare of parents and children. These programs include funding of direct services to parents and children; training of personnel to provide such services; basic and applied research to acquire systematic knowledge on which to base programs; and demonstration and pilot projects to discover the most effective ways to achieve the specific program objectives.

The Office of Economic Opportunity is an independent agency within the Executive branch of the Federal government whose primary goal is the elimination of poverty in our country. Through a variety of innovative and experimental approaches, OEO seeks and tests effective ways to improve the life circumstances of the economically, educationally, and physically disadvantaged members of our society. When programs have been sufficiently developed by OEO, they are then transferred to an appropriate agency for more permanent programming. For example, the Head Start program was transferred from OEO to DHEW in July 1969, when it was felt that Head Start centers had proven their value for child development and should become a regular Federal program.

The Department of Labor's programs relevant to child care are primarily concerned with training adults in occupations that will allow them to support themselves and their families. The provision of day care for

AGENCY	CHILD CARE PROGRAMS	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR DISADVANTAGED, MIGRANT, HANDICAPPED, INDIAN CHILDREN	BASIC AND APPLIED RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATIONS	HEALTH AND FOOD SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES	TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS	DAY CARE FACILITY RENOVATION AND CONSTRUCTION, OR LOANS
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE						
OFFICE OF EDUCATION		▲	▲		▲	
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT	▲		▲†	▲†	▲†	
SOCIAL REHABILITATION SERVICES	▲		▲		▲	
SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION	▲					
HEALTH SERVICES AND MENTAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION			▲	▲	▲	▲
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH			▲			
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY	▲					
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR	▲		▲		▲	
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT	▲				▲	
DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR		▲				
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE				▲		
SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION						▲

*See tables in the appendix for detailed information on specific program and agency, relevant public law, budget, etc.
†From "Office of Child Development. Progress and Accomplishments Report," 1971.
SOURCE: Based on tables in Congressional Record, February 9, 1970, pp. H707-H711.

FIGURE 2 FEDERAL AGENCY PROGRAMS IN OR RELATED TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION,* FY 1969

their children allows parents to participate in these training programs. Therefore, the day care programs are only secondary to the Department's basic mission.

Other Federal agencies with programs related to child care include:

- The Department of Agriculture with its food stamp, school lunch, school milk, and surplus food programs
- The Department of the Interior with its kindergarten programs in special or public schools for reservation Indian children
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development which provides funds for facilities and services, including day care, in blighted neighborhoods or model cities, and
- The Small Business Administration which provides loans to assist small businesses to establish day care programs or to renovate or construct facilities for them, as well as loans to economically disadvantaged persons to start small businesses.

DHEW has a major role in family and day care center programs, which include Head Start, Parent and Child Centers, social services to AFDC families, child welfare services, and day care for the Work Incentive Program. DHEW's Social and Rehabilitation Service administers the federally funded (traditional) day care services, as mandated in Title IV of the Social Security Act. These include the WIN program, and services to AFDC and other needy children, among whom are some children of working mothers. OEO, DOL, and HUD also have day care programs relevant to their missions.

OE and OCD

The Office of Education and the Office of Child Development administer the major Federal programs in early childhood education, including planning and coordination, service, training, and research and demonstration projects. These are specified in Figure 3.

PROGRAM	OCD	OE
PLANNING		
National Center for Child Advocacy	▲	
COORDINATION OF RELEVANT SERVICES: FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL LEVELS		
Community Coordinated Child Care (4-C)	▲	
SERVICE PROGRAMS		
Head Start: 275,000 Full Year; 118,000 Summer	▲	
Parent-Child Centers	▲	
Health Start	▲	
Home Start	▲	
Follow Through		▲
Early Childhood Education for Handicapped		▲
ESEA Titles I, II, VII		▲
Family Day Care	▲	
TRAINING PROGRAMS		
Junior High School Students Training for Work with Children (Experimental Program with OE Technical Assistance)	▲	
Child Development Associates (Paraprofessional)	▲	
Public Services Careers Program (Trains Disadvantaged)	▲	
Education Professions Development Act (Teachers, Teacher Trainers, Trainers of Teacher Trainers, Administrators, and Teacher Aides)		▲
RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION*		
Basic Research		▲
Applied Research	▲	▲
Evaluations	▲	▲

*The Federal Interagency Panel on Early Childhood Research and Development, involving all agencies with major early childhood R&D programs, is the coordinating agency for federal research and development.

FIGURE 3 CURRENT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS OF OCD AND OE

The major Federal early childhood programs are OCD's Head Start and OE's Follow Through. Head Start is both a social action program and a massive social experiment. Follow Through is a relatively small experimental program that advanced the Head Start developmental goals into the early elementary grades.

With the initiation of Project Head Start in March 1965, the Federal government entered early childhood education in earnest. This was the first time that a Federal day care program of this magnitude was primarily concerned with optimizing the development of children rather than for ancillary pirposes. Head Start was viewed as an important part of the War on Poverty. It was felt that intervention with disadvantaged children prior to elementary school entrance might contribute to their success in school and later in life, thus breaking the poverty cycle that plagues suceeding generations. The comprehensive services provided to the children include medical and dental examinations (and treatment where needed), and psychological, social welfare, and nutritional services.

In order to ensure that whatever gains children derived from their Head Start experience are not lost in regular school, the Office of Education and OEO initiated the Follow Through program in 1967, using funds under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Under Follow Through, a variety of child development techniques and methods are being studied to determine their value and efficacy in developing children's cognition.

Research and Development

A primary role of the Federal government in areas national concern is to advance knowledge and understanding, with a view toward improving the life chances and quality of life of the American people. No single

state or local government has the resources to foster and support research and development programs of the necessary magnitude. Further, increased knowledge in early childhood education is useful to all parts of the nation. Therefore, because R&D efforts have national value and because the Federal government alone has the resources to promote these activities, it is charged with major responsibilities in this area.

VII THE RESEARCH EVIDENCE

Overview

Public policy decisions are essentially political by nature; that is, they are responsive to strong pressures to act or not to act on certain issues. Research evidence can provide a powerful rationale to undergird decision-making because it is more objective than the pressures of stakeholder groups.

Research of relevance to issues in early childhood education can be differentiated as follows:

- Research on components or dimensions of developmental processes or behavior--which is generally reductionist in nature and provides the bases for more complex or synthetic research (such as programmatic research).
- Programmatic or ecological research--research on program elements as they affect behavior and/or outcome.
- Evaluation or surveys of large social action programs--such as the "Coleman Report" and the Head Start and Follow Through evaluations.

By nature, educational research is multidisciplinary, drawing upon the perspectives and approaches of a variety of disciplines to illuminate an educational issue. This is just as true of research in early childhood education.

Programmatic research in early childhood education is recent indeed, most of it dating from the mid-1960s, when it burgeoned under the impetus of Head Start. And this type of effort, to assess systematically the effects of specific program elements--curriculum, teacher-child interactions, and other program variables--on the child's developmental domains is still limited primarily to the economically disadvantaged

population served by programs such as Head Start. Such systematic studies have not been mounted to determine program effects on economically advantaged children, nor have all subcultural populations (Indian, migrants, Puerto Ricans, Orientals, etc.) been included in these studies.

Research-based Rationale for Early Childhood Education

Shortly after Sputnik made us aware that the development of our human resources was vital to our national security and when, upon closer examination, we discovered that a large segment of our population lacked the means to develop as optimally functioning human beings, research findings seemed to indicate that it was possible to supply the missing nutrients if we began sufficiently early in the child's life span. Thus, programs such as Head Start got under way.

The salient theoretical considerations that underlie this type of early childhood intervention programs include belief in (1) the modifiability and flexibility of human intelligence and human functioning; (2) the significance of the early years of life in a child's development, which may or may not involve "critical periods";* and (3) the singular importance of environmental quality in determining the child's affective

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* A "critical period" refers to the hypothesis that if an organism has not had certain stimuli or experiences by a particular time, certain responses will be absent from its repertoire.

and learning modes. However, the dominant view regarding human intelligence that prevailed until very recent times was that it was genetically determined and fixed and that, through a natural process of maturation, it would achieve its predetermined level. But there were early skeptics who tested this view. Among these, the work in the 1930s of the Iowa Child Welfare group (which included Skeels, 1958, and Skodak, 1958), and the study by Dawe (1942), as well as the later work of Kirk (1958) and Strodtbeck (1958) are notable examples.

The Skeels study in 1939 and its follow-up in 1966 provided dramatic evidence that the environment has a significant effect on a child's intellectual development and his competence. Both Hunt (1961) and Bloom (1964) became convinced that environment plays an important role in early development. Hunt (1967) inferred from the accumulating evidence from both animal and human studies that the development of intelligence is based on the interaction between a person's genetic potential and the nature and quality of his experiences.

Bloom concluded that the rate of intellectual development is greatest in the early years of life and reaches relative stability by age 12, and that it can be modified most easily during the period of its most rapid growth.

These theories seemed to shed some light on the fact that, although children from economically impoverished backgrounds may be able to function with some competence within their immediate milieu, when they enter school they are not as well equipped in cognitive, verbal, linguistic, perceptual, and attentional skills as their middle-class peers. Also, they seem to require a stronger self-concept and motivation for learning. To gain understanding of the apparent divergence between middle-class and lower-class children, a number of investigators have conducted comparative studies of child-rearing patterns between classes and among racial and

ethnic groups (Bernstein 1960,1961; Smilanski 1961, 1964; Davis 1948 and Havighurst, 1946; Hess and Shipman 1965, 1969; and Lewis 1966). Regardless of the cultural variations, these investigators have found distinct differences in childrearing patterns between the socioeconomic classes. The implication seemed to be that if disadvantaged children could have early experiences that were similar to middle-class children's early experiences, they too would succeed in school. Thus, these various conclusions seemed to support the idea that early education may prevent or ameliorate many of the conditions that appear to hamper the competence of disadvantaged children. On the basis of these theoretical considerations and of the results of early intervention studies (e.g., Dawe, 1942; Kirk, 1958; Strodtbeck, 1963) additional studies, using various curricula orientations were conducted from the late 1950s through the decade of the 1960s to determine the effect on children of early education (e.g., Darcee, 1962; Weikert, 1967; Deutsch, 1962; Bereiter-Englemann, 1966; Sprigle et al, 1967; Karnes, 1969; Miller, 1970; DiLorenzo, 1969). Also, as mentioned earlier, Head Start programs were launched, beginning in 1965, to optimize the development of economically disadvantaged preschool children and thereby improve their chances of success in school--and ultimately in life.

The available results on these recent studies revealed that in almost every case, and rather dramatically in some of them, there was improvement of the experimental groups over the contrast groups. Thus, the immediate impact of the programs was favorable.

However, it is also clear that over time, these early gains are not maintained in most of the studies that have retested their groups at a later time. This has not been invariably true, but for many of the Head Start programs, the IQ gain is not sustained after school entrance. By the end of the first year of school, the non-Head Start children equal Head Start children (Datta, 1969). However, it must be remembered that these retests have not been very much later; i.e., insufficient time has elapsed for true longitudinal results. And there are significant theoretical and methodological limitations to the research effort.

Relevant Research Hypotheses and Views

A number of investigators are testing a variety of different hypotheses that are relevant to early childhood. They range from the effects of physical growth and development and nutritional status to emotional or motivational development on the child's competence. Some of these studies and viewpoints reflect the ferment in the research community and reveal a swing on the part of some investigators from commitment to a largely cognitive-language orientation in preschool programs to a "whole child" approach. Others question the value of early childhood programs on various grounds.

Cognitive Versus Total Development

Since the most reliable measures we have are cognitive, the evaluations mentioned above are based on such measures. However, serious questions are raised as to the utility of relying on cognitive measures alone when affective and other variables appear to play a critical role in the children's cognitive or intellectual development.

According to McLure and Pence (1970), Piaget and Inhelder emphasize that four factors help to explain a child's intellectual development: organic growth, exercise and experience with physical objects, social interaction, and internal motivation. They quote from the monograph, The Psychology of the Child, by Piaget and Inhelder as follows:

> It may even seem that affective, dynamic factors provide the key to all mental development and that in the last analysis it is the need to grow, to assert oneself, to love, and to be admired that constitutes the motive force of intelligence, as well as of behavior in its totality and in its increasing complexity.

Heber's Experiment

Heber and Garber tested their hypothesis that the mentally retarded slum-dwelling mother creates a social environment that is distinctly different from the slum-dwelling mother of normal intelligence. They identified 40 mothers of below 70 IQ with newborns and assigned their 40 babies to experimental or control groups on a random basis. They initiated their intervention shortly after the babies' birth. Heber and Garber found a 33 point IQ difference by 42 months of age between the experimental and control groups, with the IQs of the experimentals at above 125 and that of the controls below 95. Heber and Garber are aware that there are pitfalls in interpreting these dramatic results and they await the results of the children's performance in regular school. They conclude:

> Nevertheless, the performance of our experimental children, today, is such that it is difficult to conceive of their ever being comparable to the "lagging" control group. We have seen a capacity for learning on the part of extremely young children surpassing anything which previously I would have believed possible. The trend of our present data does engender the hope that it may prove to be possible to prevent the kind of mental retardation which occurs in children reared by parents who are both poor and of limited ability. (p. 19)

The Time Factor

Rohwer (1971) raises the issue of the appropriate age for teaching children. His research findings lead him to question the efficacy of an educational component in early childhood programs. He concludes that it is inefficient, and perhaps unwise, to attempt to teach certain intellectual skills in early childhood which can be readily learned in later childhood or even adolescence. Based on his work, he also questions whether children are ready to learn the traditional skills, especially reading, much before age 9 or 10. Stating that we know very little about intellectual development in later childhood or adolescence, he feels that the "prime time for education" is more likely to be the later years rather than the early period. However, he states that this hypothesis requires extensive research before definitive conclusions can be reached, but the timing of education is accepted as an important issue.

Plasticity of Intellectual Development

Rohwer (1971) reports Elkind's hypothesis that "the longer we delay formal instruction, up to certain limits, the greater the period of plasticity and the higher the ultimate level of achievement." (p. 336) Rohwer adds that there is at least as much evidence and theory that supports this hypothesis as there is that supports early schooling.

Family Versus Institutional Care

Prescott and Jones (1967) made an observational study of differences between "good" home environment and well run day care centers. Their findings are summarized in Table 17. Essentially they found that, in general, the home provided a more flexible, stimulating environment in which the child received more personal attention and an opportunity to express his individuality. The centers afforded a chance for the child to help himself more than in the home and to interact with his peers and other adults. As a result, they feel that a "good" home supplemented by a short-day permissive nursery school experience would provide the optimal situation for the young child. In the case of young children needing out-of-home care, they feel that good family day care homes have many of the advantages of the child's own home and are preferable for very young children, especially for infants.

Family-Centered Approaches

Schaeffer (September and October, 1971) has reviewed early childhood research on disadvantaged children and concluded that family-centered education is more likely to produce lasting results than institution-centered early education. Based on his own research in addition to findings of Gray, Levenstein, and Gordon, British and Dutch investigations, and others, he finds that parent training programs are not only effective in terms of the child in question, but they also diffuse vertically to other siblings and horizontally within the neighborhood of the target family. He also indicates that concurrent training programs for the target child and his parents are more effective than either program alone.

These remarks and research thrusts provide only a small indication of the ferment and effort in the research community. There are on-going research and evaluation programs (Head Start, Follow Through, and other smaller efforts) that may provide better information in time.

VIII RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

It has been slow in coming, but the opponents of early schooling are now gathering. To buttress their position, they are using research findings that range from the neurophysiological (brain development, visual maturity, intersensory development), through psychological, to educational studies. Within the early childhood research community, there is deep concern that the nation not establish massive and universal child care programs without first obtaining far better understanding of developmental processes in all domains and of the effects of group care or early schooling at various ages.

Research findings from animal and human studies suggest that:

- Experiences from birth (and even from conception) through the early years--the period of tremendously rapid growth and development--significantly affect the developing child's physical structure and functioning capacity. (They continue to affect him throughout life, but typically not as critically.)
- The family, which is the first and most pervasive environment, has inestimable effect on the attitudes, values, learning modes, life-style, and other attributes of the child.

Certain conditions obtain for large numbers of young children that affect their development:

- Some parents are absent or wish to be absent from the home for a variety of reasons, especially to work.
- An unknown number of parents are unable to provide those elements necessary for the child's optimal physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.
- Some children have physical, mental, and emotional handicaps.

It is felt that there is a societal responsibility to provide for these lacks that affect the development of children. To this end, there are governmental programs in health, child care, education, and welfare, but they are deemed inadequate in scope, methods, and approaches. The next page summarizes the kinds of services that appear to optimize the development of young children. The ideal situation for most infants and small children is a "good" home, typically supplemented by nursery school at four or three years of age and kindergarten at five, and supported minimally or as needed by community-society services. For children of working mothers, economically or educationally disadvantaged, and handicapped children, out-of-home care and services are required. These should be of high quality.

There are those who claim that preschool programs are essentially educational in focus, part of the educational continuum. Therefore, this reasoning goes, they belong under the aegis of the educational establishment. Learning - in the adaptive sense at least - begins at conception and continues in all its forms throughout life. In essence, learning is crucial for sheer survival. Formal education, however, seeks to impart a structured set of skills and knowledge that society considers essential for its children to attain, with the expectation that they will then become useful citizens.

To the extent that early childhood education is viewed as a way to impart a structured set of specific skills and knowledge, it can be said to be part of the educational continuum. But to the extent that it is seen as providing a relatively unstructured and enhancing environment for the child's total development, it can be viewed as unique and separate from the formal educational system. In the past, when early childhood education was considered at all, the latter view prevailed.

Hypothesized Child Care Needs

Ideal for most children:

"Good" home supplemented at 4 years (and perhaps 3 years) by a few hours of "nursery" school per week; at 5 by kindergarten

Effort required:

Ameliorative:

Supportive services to families needing them: nutritional, health, educational, temporary child care, informational, occupational

Preventive:

Educational:

Training of potential parents: junior and senior high school students

Societal:

Guaranteed income → more viable families

Children of working mothers, of grossly inadequate homes, or handicapped:

Developmental group or family day care specifically suited to individual child's needs for optimal growth; this implies a variety of approaches and programs keyed to diverse backgrounds

Effort required:

Ameliorative:

Supportive services (as above) are critical for many families

Preventive:

Educational:

Developmental early childhood programs
Training of potential parents: junior and senior high school students

Societal:

Guaranteed income → more viable families

Vulnerable children:

These abandoned, abused, battered, or neglected children require almost total societal care: foster home care or removal from the home at least during crisis family periods during which time attention can be paid to the needs of the family as well to make it more viable and less destructive to its members

We conclude that it is too soon to mount a massive program of universal early childhood education. The rationale for this conclusion follows:

(1) While it appears clear that there are a number of ways in which families "at risk" can be helped, we do not yet know enough about the probable long term effects of early group experience and early "educational" training with respect to the average young child in the normal range of homes, to justify mounting a universal program of early education. Even for the so-called disadvantaged child, results of experimental educational programs so far are sufficiently equivocal that they should continue to be treated as small-scale experimental efforts, with careful long term evaluation.

(2) Since critical research issues remain unanswered, to advance the concept of earlier schooling as a universal "good" that should be available to all preschool children appears to be premature. This is especially true at this time when the educational establishment is faced with unresolved issues in ongoing programs and when the costs of the educational endeavor are mounting.

(3) Since the needs of various groups for early childhood programs are so diverse--in program content, hours of operation, extent of parent involvement, comprehensiveness of services, and other factors--a variety of programs should be developed, validated, and evaluated.

(4) There is an increasing realization of the importance of parents as the child's first and most significant teachers. As a result, there is a growing trend in the early childhood field to provide ways to support and help parents assume a more active, more aware role in their children's developmental progress. A variety of parent training programs, toy libraries, and other arrangements are needed, and in some cases being developed, by early childhood professionals. Training of young people as potential parents is also needed.

(5) At present, OCD - with mission and programmatic responsibilities that span the birth-to-school age period - and with programs that address the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of children appears suited to administer the needed programs for children of working parents, and disadvantaged and handicapped children. This is especially true where programs must run long hours of the day or night.

However, there are critically important thrusts for the educational establishment and OE to continue and expand. The primary one is to pursue basic knowledge of developmental processes, especially the learning process, as these undergird all educating efforts. Further, programmatic research on model or pilot early childhood efforts. Training of personnel is a legitimate function as is curriculum development for a variety of programs.

Proposed Additional Federal Programs

Evidence from such studies as the Coleman Report and from the apparent ineffectiveness of many educational programs in the central cities, as well as from testimony of professionals in early childhood development indicates that the impact of the home on the child's learning and life styles is often far more significant than the impact of the school. Thus programs that would strengthen the family would appear to have positive effects on the school effort. Comprehensive supportive services for families should be available to all needing them. Important programs for amelioration of social conditions affecting the family would include:

(1) Income maintenance to allow the mother to choose whether she will stay home and care for children or work; income maintenance provides basic security and stability by allowing the planning of purchases, activities and many other aspects of family life.

(2) Availability of jobs for all persons willing to work.

(3) Health care delivery systems that reach the economically less advantaged, including birth control information, prenatal care, genetic counseling, and general health care.

(4) Improved programs in preventive and supportive health, nutrition, welfare, and training services to families that will make them more viable and able to fulfill their members' basic needs.

Conclusion

There are serious policy issues involved in early childhood education. They range from basic general issues regarding the extent of societal responsibility for child care and rearing, through moral and scientific issues (including the long-range effects of group care on young children), to more specific issues of programmatic concern. The viability of the family as the primary child-rearing agent is at issue. Involved are basic and deepening societal problems that require concerted efforts toward their resolution.

At present, it is clear that the case for societal assumption of universal child care and rearing has not been established. Clearly established, however, is the urgent need for expanded federally funded resources for the care and development of children "at risk" and for strengthening the nation's families. What remains unknown as yet, is what the "educational" component of early childhood programs should be and what kinds of settings and programs are appropriate for our children. Both our on-going program experiences and our research efforts will aid us in improving our decisions and programs over time.

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